



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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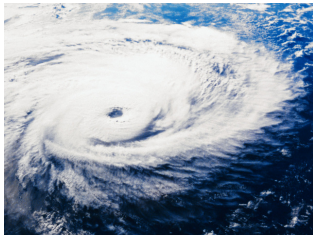
Vol. 23, No. 16
August 21, 2009

by

Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

OVERVIEW

If last week was the flounder week for August, this week was the cobia week! Cobia action continues throughout the area, and was especially hot at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and around the York Spit recently. The flounder action, while a little more scattered than last week, was still good with several large fish being caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and the Hampton Bar. Offshore, the marlin action seems to be improving, and inshore, the overall fishing is improving with croaker and spot becoming larger and more abundant.



Of large concern this weekend, especially when considering the billfish tournaments, is Hurricane Bill, or as some people are calling it, Ole' Billy Bob (Actually, why are there no Billy Bob and Bobbie Sue named hurricanes?). The predictions for swells offshore upwards of 10-feet for this weekend has even the most avid offshore anglers starting to think that honey do list might not be so bad. We'll see how close the weather guru's are to their predictions, but no matter what, please be safe, whether inshore or offshore.

Finally, we would like to announce that after an 8-month hiatus, Blueline Tilefish, Golden Tilefish, Snowy Grouper, Warsaw Grouper, and Wreckfish are all back in the species to be donated list for VMRC's Marine Sporting Collection Project! Removed at the beginning of the year due to budgeting projections, the popular offshore deep drop species are once again eligible for those ever popular t-shirts and hats. We've even heard stories of some anglers trying to sign up their dogs to receive these rewards (sorry fido, our smallest size is a medium for two-arms, not four legs!). Check out the updated listing on page 9, and once Hurricane Bill moves away, and the rollers smooth out, go deep dropping!

And now, the fishing reports!!!!

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

Donna at Captain Bob's reports that croaker and flounder fishing continues to be good near Chincoteague. The hot spot for the week is definitely the Subway Cars at the Wrecks. There, anglers are loading up with 9-pound flounder and maxing out on both flounder and spadefish.

Wachapreague

At the Wachapreague Marina, three white marlin were caught on Sunday, and a few yellowfin tuna were reported. Dolphin are still around as well.

Cape Charles

Staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle report that the croaker action has slowed out of Wise Point (Buoy 262 area). However, anglers are doing well with flounder near Buoy 36A and The Cell. There were also decent reports of flounder near the pilings around the High Rise Bridge of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Sea mullet were reported around Latimer Shoals and along the spans of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Two cobia, weighing around 70 pounds each, were also brought in last week.

Ernie, at Cherrystone Bait and Tackle, reports that fishing is improving daily. Keeper flounder have been caught with regularity, croaker catches have been increasing in size, and the crabbing is excellent.

Captain Ray Cardone, of Cherrystone, reported another excellent week of flounder fishing. Last week, a young angler on his boat landed a 25-inch, 6 ½ -pound flounder. Other fish over 20 inches were landed as well. The surprise of the week was when one angler caught a double-header of triggerfish. Overall, there have been abundant croaker as well, and there are reports of excellent sight-casting cobia fishing at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

Staff at Cobb's Marina reports that flounder are scattered. However, when the anglers have been able to find them, the action has been really great.

At the Sunset Boating Center, there are reports that the Hampton Bar is HOT for flounder action. Nine keeper flounder were found there by one boat in a single trip last week. Elsewhere, the keepers have been scattered: however, the keeper ratio is much better than it has been in recent weeks.

Staff at Salt Ponds Marina reported three citation flounder from last weekend's Salt Ponds Summer Slam, 3rd Annual Flounder Tournament. First place went to a 10-pound, 8-ounce fish caught using squid at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. The second and third place fish were 9 pound, 8 ounces, and 7 pounds, 8 ounces, respectively. Both were landed at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, as well.

While no citations were reported from the York River Fishing Center, the cobia fishing has been really good. Numerous cobia were spotted at the York Spit, and staff reports that it is the best cobia action they have seen in a long time. Puppy drum can also be found around the grassy areas inshore, and the spot fishing has really picked up recently in the York River.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

Cobia fishing remains excellent. York Spit and the Bluefish Rock area are producing good catches for anglers anchored on chum slicks. Sight casting is producing fish throughout the lower bay especially along the buoy lines and around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Doormat flounder are being caught all along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, around Buoy 36A, and in the area of the Cell. Spanish mackerel are abundant around the Chesapeake Light area and into the bay up to Windmill Point. Some large sheepshead were being found at the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Some spadefish and black drum can also be found around the islands. Large red drum continue to roam around the shoals near the mouth of the bay. The inshore ocean hills, like the SE Lumps and 26 -Mile Hill, are loaded with life. Catches include false albacore, bluefish, king and Spanish mackerel, and some bluefin tuna. The South Tower is still loaded with large amberjack. Offshore action is centered on a very good billfish bite. Most of the action has been between 40 and 100 fathoms. Dolphin, wahoo, and some yellowfin tuna are around, but abundant white marlin, good numbers of blue marlin and a great sailfish bite have most out there looking for the next billfish bite.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

While keeping a watchful eye on hurricane threats to the southeast, anglers are scrambling to get in some fishing before any inclement weather moves in. The fish seem to be cooperating with this plan.

Cobia action has been outstanding so far this year, and this week is no different. Their late summer trend of favoring buoys and bridge pilings is gaining momentum. More fish are also cruising along the surface, making promising targets for sight casters. This pattern will only improve over the next several weeks. Cobia chummers are still scoring decent fish within bay waters, with Bluefish Rock and Latimer Shoal favorite cobia spots lately.

With the recent rain and easterly winds, the incredible flounder activity from last week has eased up. Although not on fire, some nice fish are still available for those putting in the time. Larger fish are responding to live bait along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Drifters are finding keepers in the lower bay inlets, the small boat channel south of the 1st Island, the Baltimore Channel passing near Cape Henry, the Thimble Shoal Channel, Buoy 42, and Back River Reef. Fresh strip bait is working well for drifters.

The sheepshead were alert this week, with nice fish taking fiddler crabs, crab, and clam. The entire span of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, as well as all the tubes of the artificial islands are holding fish. The trigger fish action is still a go, with bigger fish starting to show. With no limits on triggers, anglers are loading up on these fish from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel structure.

Spanish mackerel are available off of Cape Henry, the Ocean Front, over the tubes of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and along tide rips in the lower and middle bay areas. These fish will chase small spoons trolled at a quick clip. King mackerel are beginning to show promise off the coast line from Virginia Beach to the Carolina line, where mostly smaller kings are hitting trolled baits and spoons lately.

Red drum are on a late-season roll, with good action around the 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, the Nine Foot Shoal, and Latimer Shoal. Black drum are still schooled at the 3rd and 4th islands, but not for long.

Decent croaker are available near the Monitor Merrimac and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, with the 2nd island a good place to try lately. Areas off Kiptopeke and Cherrystone on the Eastern Shore are also holding big hardheads. The croaker bite in Oyster slowed a little this week, but should pick back up with warming temperatures. Nice spot are also making a showing near the 1st island, and within Lynnhaven and Rudee Inlets. Puppy drum are still a good bet in both Rudee and Lynnhaven with cut bait working well right now.

Virginia's tarpon action is down once again. According to Chris at Chris' Bait and Tackle, the recent cool-down dropped the water temperature to 77 degrees on the seaside of Oyster. Tarpon thrive in tropical waters, so a few hot days could rekindle the bite.

Big amberjack will take any offering at the South A Tower right now. Several boats are detouring to the Tower after a slow offshore bite. Jack Crevelle will settle in at the Chesapeake Light Tower later this month. We spotted a school cruising up the Baltimore Channel at the mouth of the bay this week.

Offshore, the billfish bite is heating up, and should continue to should improve through the month. Blue and white marlin are possibilities, with a good number of sailfish in the mix this year.

Virginia Middle Bay

Roger, with Jett's Hardware, reports the fishing has been holding steady with bluefish and Spanish mackerel biting trolled metal spoons. Croaker are still biting in the deeper water along with a few spot.

Dan, of Smith's Point Marina, reports the fishing has been strong with Spanish mackerel around Smith's Point Light. A citation flounder (8 pounds) was also caught in the vicinity of Smith's Point Light on Saturday. There are reports of keeper flounder being caught at the jetties of the Potomac River as well. Keeper striped bass are being reported on the Maryland side of the state line. Some spot and croaker are being caught along with the occasional bluefish.

Butch, with Garret's Marina, says large croaker continue to be the story in his area, with fish weighing up to two pounds. A few small spot are in the mix as well. Flounder are showing up around Windmill Point and Stingray Point.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

COBIA, COBIA, COBIA! Five citations were reported this week! Cobia are biting very well at York Spit and Bluefish Rock, and have been active just south of New Point Light. Menhaden chum combined with live croaker, eels or whole menhaden are the baits of choice.

Spanish mackerel fishing continues to be good. They like small Clark and Drone spoons pulled at high speed (6-8kts). Good catches continue to be made off Stingray light, along Windmill Bar, and along the bar edge up into Fleets Bay. They are also available along the tug boat channel from Buoys 2R to 41A to Milford Haven and south to Wolftrap Light. A lot of bluefish are mixed in as well.

Local creeks and rivers continue to produce keeper spot and croaker. Spot are available off Gwynn's Island, at the Spike (3R) and up the Rappahannock River around Buoy 8. Big croaker have become harder to find in the rivers and are schooling in the open bay.

Flounder fishing has improved somewhat at Buoy 42 and the Cell area. There are still keeper flounder being caught in the Rappahannock around Buoy 8.

Speckled trout and puppy drum are available in waters over hard bottom and over grass beds. Several limits of keeper specks have been caught in the waters around Gwynn Island. Peelers are working very well as are live bunker caught by cast net.

Virginia Beach

Staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center report that there has been really nice inshore fishing this week. Flounder were found in the inlet, and while many were undersized, the keeper ratio is about 1 in 7. There are also taylor bluefish, spot, croaker, and the occasional speckled trout. Inshore, cobia fishing has been doing really well, and Spanish mackerel and taylor bluefish were also landed. The Virginia Beach Billfish Tournament began Thursday the 20th and will continue through the weekend. Staff is expecting a nice turnout because there were numerous marlin and sailfish catches this week. White and blue marlin have been very abundant. A 52-pound yellowfin tuna was caught last week, and dolphin are still being found. Staff expects the tuna to return just after Labor Day.

At Fisherman's Wharf Marina, white marlin catches were reported. Nine white marlin and a dozen sailfish were reported over the past week. Dolphin fishing has been pretty slow.

Virginia Piers

At the Ocean View Pier, spot action has been good, but no yellow-bellies have been found yet. Croaker, and a few flounder were also reported.

Spot, a few sea mullet, croaker, bluefish, and numerous crabs were reported from the Lynnhaven Pier this week.

At the Virginia Beach Fishing Pier, staff reported a quiet week. Spot, croaker, and bluefish were landed,

and crabbing continues to be good.

Very slow fishing was reported from the Little Island Fishing Pier: however, two cobia were caught last week. A few sea mullet and spot were also caught. Staff blames the westerly wind for the slow conditions.

At the Buckroe Fishing Pier, a 64-pound (62 inch) cobia was caught late Saturday evening. Several spot, croaker, bluefish, numerous puffers, small black sea bass, Spanish mackerel, and sea mullet were also landed.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet has had another banner week. While the number of dolphin being caught has decreased, the sizes have gotten larger. The billfish bite has improved significantly with large numbers of releases for sailfish, blue marlin and white marlin. Yellowfin tuna, blackfin tuna, wahoo, amberjack, and king mackerel were also caught in decent numbers. Bottom droppers were finding several species of groupers and snappers. Striped bass were working in the 12- to 15-mile range, and large king mackerel were working a little closer to shore. Artificial reefs saw good catches of spadefish, triggerfish, sheepshead, tautog, and black sea bass. Nearshore anglers saw red drum and Spanish mackerel. Pier fishermen and surf fishermen had the usual summer-time diversity of fish to chase which included Spanish mackerel, bluefish, pompano, puffers, and red and black drum. Cobia and king mackerel were caught at night from the local piers as well. Inshore fishing saw the flounder and speckled trout bite slow down over the past week. Nighttime and the early morning hours were the best time to fish. Structure continues to hold sheepshead and black drum.

South of Oregon Inlet, the spot and sea mullet have been biting blood worms and sand fleas. Bluefish and Spanish mackerel can be caught on metal, with early morning and late afternoon being the best times to find them. Ramp 43 was one of the more popular spots for the Spanish mackerel.

Offshore fishing has been strong for people working out of Hatteras Inlet as well. Dolphin are being caught and brought back to the dock, in good numbers, along with wahoo and blackfin tuna. Good numbers of billfish releases, all three species, were reported when the wind allowed people to go further offshore. Inshore fishing has seen Spanish mackerel, bluefish, grey trout, speckled trout, and flounder.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.











ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM	TAUTOG
				
KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	TILEFISH (BLUELINE OR GOLDEN)	WRECKFISH, SNOWY GROUPEL, WARSAW GROUPEL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
				

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

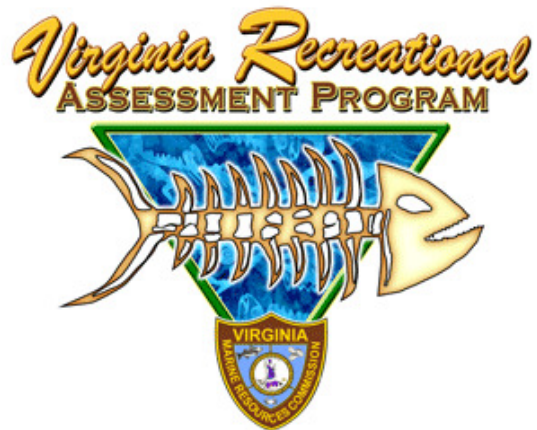
**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked! Report at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The page has a blue header with the commission's name and logo. Below the header, there's a section titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" with a "Welcome Jgrist," message. A prominent message states "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" and explains that they are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. Another section titled "New 2008 Tautog Regs" lists the closed season (May 1 through June 24), minimum size limit (14 inches), and possession limit (4 per person). A box on the left shows statistics for June 16, 2008: 1,457 members, 295 trips, and 3,941 catches. At the bottom, there are "Related Links" and "Help" sections.

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
 - fish
 - birds
 - marine mammals
 - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!

VMRC-Managed

Locations!*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk
Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach
Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton
Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles
Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague
Wallace's Bait and Tackle, Hampton



*DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia

The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.

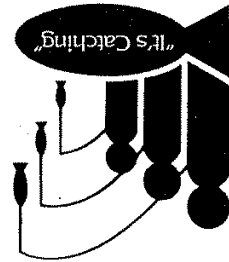
If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email

alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



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Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water